

tax in Nanjanad were converted into money at the above rate, it being declared at the same time that a *kotta* was equivalent to 9.3625 *paras*. The people at once pointed out that eleven *chackrams* was the price of one *para* of 800 cubic inches of paddy, that the *kotta* was equivalent to 9.3625 *paras* of 640 cubic inches, and that the commutation rate had to be fixed at the above rate. As a result of their contention, the Government subsequently declared a *kotta* as equivalent to 8.65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches.

In the year 1085, when the Weights and Measures Regulation was passed, Government ignored the above decision and again fixed the *kotta* at 9.3625 *paras*. The same decision was adhered to when the Government ordered in 1089 that the tax on Sreepandaravagai lands should be paid in kind. The people again complained and in 1095 the *kotta* measure was finally fixed to be equivalent to 8.65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches. Lastly, the Member said that the tax in kind paid to Suchindram and other Devaswoms in South Travancore was paid at the rate of 7.2 *paras* per *kotta* of paddy.

Thus, in the course of a century, the *kotta* measure was subjected to several variations and the decision of 1082 unmistakably proved that the declaration of the cubical capacity of a *kotta* as equivalent to 9.3625 *paras* was made on a wrong basis. Again, in the G. O. of 1082 fixing the *kotta* as equivalent to 8.65 *paras*, it was laid down that 8.65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches was the capacity of a *kotta* according to the smallest of the *marakkal* measures examined by the then Dewan Peishkar. The Member doubted whether the Peishkar did really examine all the measures found among the ryots and whether he verified the capacity of each and every one of such measures. Since the Government themselves had admitted in the above G. O. that there were "considerable variations in the capacity of the measures actually in use" the Member said that any decisions arrived at on the basis of one such measure could not be accurate and conclusive. In conclusion, he stated that the final decision of the Government fixing the *kotta* measure as equivalent to 8.65 *paras* in the Sirkar accounts was causing great hardship to the ryots. For instance, lands of the same settlement *tharam* situated in the Eraniel (now abolished) and Agastisvaram taluks were subjected to different assessments. That was due to the acceptance of the standard *kotta* of 8.65 *paras* in the Sirkar accounts and the commutation into money of the tax in kind as per that measure. To remedy the evils pointed out the Member prayed that the matter might be investigated once again and the standard *kotta* measure fixed at $7 \frac{1}{4}$ *paras*.

Dewan's reply.—I am sorry I have to give you a disappointing reply. I am unable to appreciate your difficulties. The matter was, as far as I can see, fully investigated by retired Peishkar Mr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar. It is true that he did not find the *marakkal* a uniform measure all over Nanjanad. Each place had its own measure and each man said that his measure was the correct measure. Mr. Subrahmanya Aiyar got hold of all the measures and examined them and the method adopted by him seems to be correct. He found that the *kotta*, which was equivalent to 8 *paras* and $6\frac{1}{2}$ *edangalies*, was the smallest *kotta* in actual use. Government thereupon ordered that that measure should be adopted. It was very much more favourable to the ryots than the *kotta* recognised in the Sirkar accounts as being equivalent to 9 *paras* and $3\frac{5}{8}$ *edangaies*. But you want that the *kotta* should now be made equal to $7 \frac{1}{4}$ *paras*, because, at the time of the settlement, the land measurement of a *kotta* was fixed as equivalent to $7 \frac{1}{4}$ *paras*. I cannot understand what the land measure has got to do with the grain measure. The whole question has been investigated very carefully and a final decision has been reached and I think it would be a wise thing to adhere to that decision. The Government have decided that the *kotta* should be taken as equivalent to 8 *paras* and $6\frac{1}{2}$ *edangalies* and they do not see adequate reasons for re-opening that decision.

29. Need for a State Bank.

Mr. Ouseph Thoma (Member, Trading Classes, Changanachery) said that the irregularities on the part of some of the joint stock companies established in the

country had shattered the confidence of the people in banks in general; that the terms and conditions formulated by the Government in respect of the proposed State-aided bank could not be considered sufficient to restore their confidence in banking activities and that it was absolutely necessary that Government should assume greater responsibility in the management of the proposed bank. He said that it was not sufficient if Government deposited a certain sum in the bank and that it was not satisfactory to deny the director to be nominated by the Government the right of vote, thereby making him powerless in regulating the working of the bank. The Government should themselves organise and manage the proposed bank with a view to give adequate impetus to the development of industries in the State, as was done in the States of Baroda, Mysore and Indore.

Dewan's reply.—You criticise the proposed constitution of the State-aided bank. You say that Government should assume responsibility for the working of the bank. In what way Government are to assume responsibility is not quite clear. But I may tell you this that Government have given the question their most careful and earnest consideration, and they thought, and still think, that their responsibility should be limited to the granting of a deposit to the bank of Rs. 5 lakhs—one-half of which will be free of interest and the other half bearing a small interest, to the appointment of a Government director without any power to vote, and to the deputation of some of their officers to examine the accounts of the bank. If Government were to assume any greater responsibility, the result would be to kill initiative and make the bank a pure State concern. I believe that this is not your idea. You refer to banks started in Baroda, Mysore and Indore. I have studied the constitution of those banks, and I may say that the Governments of Baroda, Mysore and Indore have not taken any more responsibility than what we propose to take here. The only difference is this, viz., that in those States the Government directors have the power to vote, while here the Government director will have no such right. He sits on the directorate as the representative of Government who have large interests in the bank; he will not be able to influence the decisions of the directorate; his duties will be confined to watching the working of the bank and bringing to the notice of Government any matter which deserves scrutiny. That is the only difference, so far as I remember, between the proposed bank and the banks in Mysore, Baroda and Indore. The departure we have made is a healthy one, since it vests more initiative in the hands of the people; it is a departure which, I think, should be welcome.

30. Aids to the mercantile class at Kottayam.

Mr. Ninan Iype (Member, Trading Classes, Kottayam) said that the town of Kottayam stood in need of the active support of Government in many matters connected with trade. In the first place, there was the immediate need for opening a tobacco bankshall. The merchants of Kottayam brought tobacco from Palghat and Chettipalayam after payment of duty at Arukutty and they were put to great loss, as compared with the tobacco merchants in other towns, since they were not in position to bond the stuff in warehouses prior to the payment of duty. The establishment of a tobacco bankshall at Kottayam would, in the opinion of the Member, remove the difficulties and the merchants as well as the Government would stand to gain in consequence. The traders of Mundakayam, Peermade and Kanjirapal could also then bond their stock at Kottayam.

The Member then requested that the market landing at Kottayam might be widened so as to give shelter to a larger number of boats than at present. The Cutcherry landing and the market landing were the two most important landing places of Kottayam, and, since the Cutcherry landing was at times not available for landing and for loading merchandise, it was necessary that the market landing should be widened and improved in the interests of trade.

The Member next represented that the two roads that connected the Cutcherry and the market landing with the market were steep and uneven, and that the condition of those roads deserved the early attention of the Government. The Member requested that the two roads referred to might be immediately levelled up and improved.